there's a storm comin'

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there’s a storm comin’

by lumosatnight

Summary

After he escapes from Azkaban, Sirius gets picked up on his way to the mainland.

Notes

Prompt: Dark Nautical

Special thanks to the wonderful amazing Kat for betaing and hyping up this silly little story!

See the end of the work for more notes

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The wind was already howling against the hull by the time The Captain made it out of bed. He wouldn't normally sleep this late, but his meeting with his most trusted advisors, which had involved an entire bottle of rum and far too many glasses of stolen wine, had ended well into the morning. His head throbbed, and he closed his eyes for a moment longer.

There was movement next to his bed accompanied by a pitiful whining sound.

"Yes, yes, I'm getting up. There's no need to yell." He blindly reached down to pet the thick head of fur. There was another whine, more urgent sounding. "Aye aye," he mumbled. "I hear you."

Swinging his legs off the bed, he fumbled around for his breeches and boots. On wobbly legs, he gave himself a moment to just stand there, then finally opened his eyes and strode toward

the door, his loyal companion trotting obediently at his heels.

The Quartermaster was already on the deck, squinting off the starboard side at the mass of roiling clouds. It wasn't often that they saw a storm this big. The Pilot had been worried, but he was always worried about something or another.

"What d'you reckon, Captain?"

The Captain groaned and rubbed his temples. "Take 'em in. It's too late to outrun her." His proclamation was followed by a loud bark, coming from the general vicinity of his kneecap. "See, we agree."

The Quartermaster frowned. She wasn't the superstitious sort, but some things simply couldn't be explained by any ordinary means. The Captain's new companion was one of them. They'd found the creature paddling in the middle of the North Sea. Only the Devil knew how it had gotten there and how it had survived for so long. The Captain had instantly taken a liking to the thing — liked to talk to it nonstop, liked to pretend it could understand him, even if the rest of the crew thought he was barmy for it.

But their captain was the captain for a reason. Everyone on the crew had willingly sworn their allegiance upon joining the ship.

"Aye, Captain." She turned toward the rest of the crew. "You heard 'im, lads! Batten down the hatches. It's going to be a big one!"

The Pilot checked his map. He spun in a circle. He checked his compass. He checked the map again, then used a dirty cloth to blot the sweat from his forehead.

No, no, no, that just wouldn't do. With the oncoming storm, their journey would be delayed *again.* And they had been so close this time! He swore he could almost see the shoreline from here. (That was a lie. Not even The Lookout could see anywhere close to the shore and wouldn't for at least a week.)

The great black beast that The Captain had recently acquired trotted up to him and rubbed against his leg. The Pilot usually didn't like animals, but this one was tolerable, he supposed. At least it didn't bite. It had become a sort of unofficial mascot of the ship after they had pulled it up from the churning waters a few weeks ago.

"Yes, I know. Another delay. Almost like these waters are cursed. Never seen anything like this before, one storm after another." He absentmindedly reached down to scratch behind the beast's ear. It looked up at him with its big soulful eyes as if to say, "It's not your fault. As long as we get there," and The Pilot huffed. He was starting to sound like The Captain, believing the beast could understand them.

“Go on inside then. You don’t want to be caught up here when the storm starts.” He shooed the beast below deck, and it ran off, tail wagging happily.

The Boatswain was double-checking the cargo hold, making sure every cart and barrel was secure, every rope tied, every knot tightened. He’d had to do a lot of that recently, what with all the storms they’d been passing through. The Boatswain was the religious sort. Everywhere he went, he brought his crucifix and his holy rosary. Doing the sign of the cross, he brought the crucifix to his lips and murmured, “Blessed Mother, let this be a short one. Please protect us from the storm.”

“What’s her holiness gon’ do from up there? It’s what you do down ‘ere that matters,” came a familiar voice that sent tingles down his spine.

The Master Gunner was clambering into the hold, packs of ammunition strapped to her chest. The Master Gunner was not the religious sort, preferring instead to rely on her gut and her rock-steady hand. She also would have appreciated some rock-steady legs right about now. She’d already made a dozen trips to the hold, moving supplies back and forth. They wouldn’t need the cannons or the guns for a long while. It was best to secure them in case of any *accidents.* The last accident had involved a tooth, a nail, and one of the Swabbies losing their left ear.

“It never hurts to try,” The Boatswain sniffed, and the Master Gunner snorted.

The Captain’s oversized-sized pet bounded down the stairs then, running circles around the two, making them crowd together.

“Blimey, calm yer horses now. You’re getting yourself all riled up for nothin’.”

The pet dropped to the ground and rolled over, exposing its soft underbelly. The Master Gunner couldn’t resist giving it a few scratches. The Boatswain kneeled next to her, and they both spent a few moments scratching in silence, their hands brushing together periodically.

Eventually, it must have gotten bored because it rolled over and took off like a shot, leaving the two of them crouching over nothing, which is when they both realized just how close together they had become.

The Boatswain immediately averted his eyes, feeling his cheeks getting hot.

“Aww, look at that. Blushing like a virgin.” They both stood, the wooden floorboards creaking under them. The Master Gunner nudged The Boatswain’s shoulder. “For the record. It looks good on ya.”

That only made The Boatswain blush harder.

“Aye, you mangey mutt, what do you want now?”

The Cook continued ladling the mead into the empty bottle. She wanted to get as much out as she could. They were going to need it later. The Captain already looked like he could use a stiff one since he stumbled out of his cabin this morn'. The Pilot too, while they were on the topic, but he always needed to undo a couple of buttons on his vest.

The mutt trotted up to her, and she eyed it suspiciously. She'd tried to convince The Captain to let her add it to the evening stew, but The Captain had refused. Now it was just another stomach to keep full, and gee did it have a stomach. It always seemed to be hungry, begging for scraps at every opportunity. She even saw it digging into the gunpowder when she had her back turned once.

When they'd picked it up, it had been a scraggly old thing — could practically see its entire ribcage beneath the matted fur. Now it was still scraggly but a little less so, had some meat on its bones at least.

"I ain't got nothing for you today. All packed away because of the storm."

The mutt remained unfazed, merely planted itself across from her and stared at her with its shining silver eyes. They had been unsettling at first, a bit too human-like, always tracking things like they knew exactly what they were looking at. The Cook had mostly gotten used to it by now.

"Alright, fine. Go on then." She held out the ladle and let the mutt take a sip. Was it bad to give it mead? Well, she didn't hear the mutt complaining and she wasn't about to go running to The Captain to tell him.

The mutt gave an excited yelp, bowed its shaggy black head in thanks, and then ran off, probably to bother another member of the crew.

The Cook shook her head fondly.

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The Surgeon stood at the bow, looking out at the choppy waves. It was going to be another bad one. He hoped there wouldn't be a lot of injuries. He was already prepared, of course, already had his bag of supplies packed, his potions and tonics refilled, but one could still hope.

He felt a presence beside him and looked down. "Ahh, so you found me at last." He crouched down and sat on the ground, letting his legs hang off the side of the ship.

He didn't like touching it like the others did. He'd seen how shaken up it'd been when they pulled it from the waters, how malnourished, how broken. How human-like its eyes had been, mistrustful and calculating, when he had nursed it back from the brink of death.

"How's my good boy doing?" His voice was warm. His good boy snuggled in beside him, not touching but sharing body heat before the harsh chill of the storm fully hit them.

“I know you must be disappointed by the delay.” It shrugged. “But we’ll get to Scotland eventually. Probably less than a fortnight.” His good boy yipped. It didn’t sound happy exactly, more determined.

He didn’t know how, but he knew it needed to get to Scotland and needed to get there soon. Someone was waiting there, someone important. He knew his good boy would leave the ship then, maybe never to return. He had yet to tell anyone what he knew. No one would believe him anyway. Maybe The Captain would, but The Captain was already going to be disappointed enough when his companion disappeared.

It felt like they had entire conversations sometimes — like he could hear it talking to him in his head. That was absurd though. If his good boy could talk, why would it talk to *him?* Why could he understand it and no one else?

“You should go back inside,” he said. “It’s getting dangerous out here.” He, himself, would go inside if he could, but for some reason, he couldn’t. He hated not knowing if the crew were injured, if he could have helped them, even with something small.

His good boy growled, and The Surgeon sighed. Yes, his good boy was stubborn, almost as stubborn as he was.

“Suit yourself.” He leaned back in a slouch, getting comfortable. “But you better not fall off again. I’m not fishing you out this time.”

His good boy cocked his head, tongue lolling out the side of his mouth. It was a ridiculous expression that nearly made The Surgeon laugh out loud. It almost looked human.

Side by side, they sat at the bow of the ship as the rolling grey clouds grew steadily closer.

End Notes

AARRRRGGHHH ⚓

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